

KALIFORNSKI

NEWSLETTER OF THE YUGOSLAV-AMERICAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION - NO. 8 - FEB. 1980
P. O. Box 226, Watsonville, California 95076 Circulation 325

EDITOR: Andy Gulermovich - 758-6252

ASSOCIATES: John Basor - 724-2169 and Susan Solano - 724-1731

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

by
Patricia (Gospodnetich) Solano

ANNIVERSARY

It's been a year since we as the Yugoslav American Cultural Organization came to light. We all hoped for the best and instead got even better results.

We've come together many times now at YACO functions and have renewed old friendships and made many new ones and so have become a large family in that way. We've come to care about and for one another.

Many of us have Yugoslav roots but even those of you who don't have joined our large family because of an interest and appreciation of the culture and its beautiful traditions.

We have dreams for YACO. They are dreams on a grand scale and will take time to realize coming true. We have the patience not to expect immediate finalization of all these plans. We also have the determination and pride to know that hard work and sacrifice will achieve all that we hope for and each of us will do our part when necessary.

We have started incorporation proceedings and we have started a building fund. It may seem a bit far fetched to some people but as I said before, we tend to dream on a grand scale. We've found a strong feeling for the Yugoslav culture and we'll work hard to make it

cont'd on page 2

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Patricia L. (Gospodnetich) Solano 724-1731 or 722-4357

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT: John (Ivo) Basor 724-2169

SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT: Bob Hubal 724-4430

COMMUNICATING SECRETARY: Nevenka Novcich 724-7647

RECORDING SECRETARY: Pat Gulermovich 758-6252

TREASURER: Ron Hill, c/o P.O.Box 226 Watsonville, CA 95076

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Potluck

WHEN: February 3, 1980, 4 to 8 p.m.

WHERE: VFW Hall, 1960 Freedom Blvd. Freedom, CA (no stairs)

WHO: YACO members, friends, relatives and anyone interested.

WHY: To celebrate our FIRST ANNIVERSARY with a Valentine potluck theme.

PROGRAM: Live fashion show with many colorful and beautiful costumes of the various republics of Yugoslavia. Surprises and prizes and lots of GOOD food!

NOTE: Please bring your own table service as well as that for your guests.

DON'T MISS IT!

a lasting feeling to be passed on and remembered even after our time. We are a family, a hard working and determined family and we will accomplish our dreams maybe not today or the immediate future but we will build a remembrance to the Yugoslav culture for all to enjoy and appreciate for years to come.

With a positive attitude and determination we will make the Yugoslav American Cultural Organization a lasting and proud arm of the Yugoslav community. YACO will keep the younger and older generations together in a family atmosphere which is so vitally important for all times. With that purpose, the culture and traditions of Yugoslavia will go on and be passed from generation to generation. Ours won't become a dead culture because of indifference.

Within a year we've come this far. Our membership has grown and steadily increases monthly. Our newsletter "The KALIFORNSKI" has become one of our strongest links within the immediate community as well as far reaching areas throughout California. Our publication is now circulated to over 325 households as well as to businesses.

YACO is here to satisfy the needs of the people. So far we're doing just great but watch us, we're growing and we are going to do even better and bigger things! We are going to build in more ways than one! Join us and become a part of the future!



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Head Smoker - Pete Scurich

Asst. Smoker - Nick Scurich

SERBO-CROAT!

GRAMMAR CORNER by Nevenka Novcic

day	dan
today	danas
good day	dobar dan
dawn	zora
at dawn	u zoru
morning	jutro
this morning	jutros
in the morning	izjutra/ujutro
good morning	dobro jutro
noon	podne
before noon	prije/pre podne
at noon	u podne
afternoon	poslije/posle podne
evening	večer/veče
this evening	večeras
in the evening	uvečer/uveče
good evening	dobar (or) dobra večer (Cr.) dobar (or) do veče (Sr.)
night	noc
tonight	noćas
last night	sinoć
good night	laku noc
midnight	ponoć
before midnight	prije/pre ponoći
at midnight	u ponoć
after midnight	poslije/posle ponoći
yesterday	jučer/juče
day before	prekjučer/prekjuče
yesterday	sutra
tomorrow	prekosutra
day after tomorrow	

VISIT A FRIEND TODAY!

KEEP IN TOUCH!

SUPPORT YACO - GET A FRIEND
TO JOIN!

PAJARO VALLEY APPLE INDUSTRY 1979 HARVEST FESTIVAL

by
John (Ivo) Basor

The first apple harvest festival in 65 years in Watsonville was held in September of 1979. Pam Gurley was crowned Queen of the renewed Apple Harvest Festival. Miss Gurley's crowning was a very proud moment for her mother Mae Gurley and especially for her grandmother Lena Kesovia. Mrs. Kesovia has kept the family apple orchards going since her husband's (Vido Kesovia) death in 1962. The family orchards on Riverside Road were started in 1921 when the Kesovias came to the Pajaro Valley from the Konavli Valley in Yugoslavia.

The Watsonville Register-Pajaronian published a special supplement on September 26, 1979 to honor that which was held in Watsonville on September 27, 28 and 29 of 1979. On the front page of the supplement there are reproductions of 12 of the old apple box labels from the last festival some 65 years age. Yugoslavs should be proud to note that 7 of the 12 old labels were from firms owned by Yugoslavs. The 7 featured were:

1. Best Strike - Mitchell Madesko
2. Buffalo- J.P. Braycovich Co.
3. Buak Green Valley Apples-
W.M. Buak
4. Lucy Trail Apples- P.A.
Scurich & Co.
5. Sun Flavor - P.M. Resetar
6. Utility Brand- Bachan Fruit
Co.
7. Appleton Apples - Borcovich
& Dradovich

Obviously there were countless other Yugoslavs who were in the apple business, but there was only room for 12 labels in total. At any rate, we can take a great deal of pride in our fellow Slavs' role in the establishment of the apple industry in the Pajaro Valley.

NOTE: If anyone has any of the old labels laying around, would you please contact any one of the officers of YACO as we would like to add them to our cultural memorabilia that we hope

to display in a building of our own someday soon. In fact any artifacts that you might have and would like to donate to the YACO memorabilia collection we would be very happy to use on loan or donation.)

Recipe

OKRUGLICE OD RIZE - Rice Dumplings

- 1/2 lb. rice
- 1/2 c. cooked meat
- 2 tbsp. lard
- 2 eggs, separated
- 2 tbsp. flour
- 2 tbsp. (smoked) bacon, diced

Fry the rice in the lard. When it has browned, cover with water. When the rice is half cooked, remove from heat and drain. Add the finely ground meat and two egg yolks. Fold in the stiffly beaten egg white. Beat in the flour. Shape the dough into small dumplings and cook in salted, boiling water for 10-15 minutes. Fry the bacon in its own fat. Drain the dumplings, place in a serving bowl and sprinkle with (smoked) bacon. Serves 4-5.

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OUR TRAVELS THROUGH YUGOSLAVIA

by

Peter and Margaret Biskup

(Continued from the Jan. issue)

Our next trip was to the island of Vis where Margaret's father was born. All of her family had migrated to the USA, so she had absolutely no relatives there. There were a lot of Vlastelicas, but none related. We visited an old family friend, Rade Kuzmanich, who had returned from Watsonville a couple of years before to his wife and daughter to spend his last days where he was born. He had spent a long time in the USA. Also, we got to see the house where Margaret's father and all of her uncles and aunts were born. We would have probably seen more but, Vis being a military base, we were only allowed to stay one day and two nights.

Our last voyage from Split that time was to the island of Brač carrying a message from John "Blondie" Kusanovich to his brother, Klement, in the village of Praznice, the ancestral home of many Watsonville families including the Ivelichs, Goiches, Kusanoviches, Jerciches, and many others. Since then, we have gone there many times and never failed to visit George Ivelich, Lillian Nielsen's uncle.

On our following trip in 1968, the general situation had improved very much. There were a lot of automobiles, a good many new hotels were up and going up, and housing and condominiums were rising at a fast rate. But what interested me most was that a cousin Peter in Dubrovnik had built a new and bigger house and had bought a car, a little Ficko, but it was a car. And cousin Marko, in the village, had a Rekord station wagon made by Opel coming soon,

so it looked like our traveling problems would soon be over.

That year, one of our first trips out of Dubrovnik was to visit the Vincent Gizdichs who had moved into their new house in Split from Watsonville a few months before. We spent a good many days with them and had a great time with Vincent and Mary and the whole Gizdich clan and their relatives in Split and Klis, the family home base.

Historic

TWO NAMES

Ancient Rome ruled the Adriatic coast before the arrival of the Slavs in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. After the decline of Rome the city-state of Venice came to dominate the Dalmatian coast with the exception of Dubrovnik. Obviously, the Roman and Venetian influences upon the Slavs was significant.

As Venice dominated the commerce of the Adriatic, Italian became the official language of business undertakings. All Slav merchants and noblemen had to speak Italian, also. There was also during the Middle Ages a large number of intermarriages between Slavs and Venetians. For these two reasons, many noble families and of the merchant class used two surnames.

Many of our Slavic ancestors used an Italian name for dealing with the Venetians and their Slavic name for "home use". For example: Gozze & Gucetic, Gondola & Gundulic, Bona & Bunic, Sorgo & Sorkocevic, etc.

Interestingly, there are many Slavic families both here and in Dalmatia that still have Italian sounding names. For one reason or another, the Italian version of their surname has endured. We all know Yugoslavs who have Italian names.

Undoubtedly, there are numerous other reasons for the use by Slavs of Italian surnames, the primary reason is that it was an accepted custom during the Middle Ages for Slav merchants and nobility to have and use an Italian surname in dealing with the Venetians.

Help!

YACO is in desperate (well, almost) need of a storage place. We have gathered materials and memorabilia that have to be stored from time to time and we are seeking maybe a garage that someone is not using to full capacity or not using at all. If you have something that we might use until the time that we have our own club storage space, please call one of the officers' numbers on the front page. We would certainly appreciate it or contact one of us at the potluck in February.

GENERAL STORE

We have been generously given many valuable food items again for our Country Store and at this time we ask our members if they have any items (crocheted, knitted, sewn, baked, hand crafted, etc..) that they would care to donate to our Country Store for sale thereby benefitting YACO, we would really appreciate the consideration. We have a budget to maintain for our Kaliforski and this would greatly help that idea. If you would like to contribute something to this corner, please see one of the officers at the February potluck.



ORCHIDS & ACCOLADES
by
Babe Hill



ORCHIDS to Abrasevic Dance bus driver for the easy trip plus she had to stay outside of Carmel City as buses aren't allowed within the city to park. GUESS WHO played Yugoslav cassettes on the bus???

ORCHIDS & ACCOLADES to Bob Hubal, John Basor, Iliya Pista; Susan Solano, Babe Hill and Michael and Michelle Solano who all attended the Library presentation as well as Judge and Mrs. Franich who all attended as YACO members.

GUESS WHO suggested to the Yugoslav Consul General that Yugoslavia keep our Mayor Johnston as a hostage????

ORCHIDS & ACCOLADES to Andy Guler-movich for his presentation on folk costumes of Croatia and also to Babe Hill for her narration (which couldn't have been done without the help of Nevenka Novcich, so orchids to her also) ORCHIDS & ACCOLADES to new members ANN BACKOVICH & MATO PALJETAK for joining YACO on meeting night (Jan 6, 1979) and for staying to enjoy the program as well.



SPORTS
IN
YUGOSLAVIA
by
John (Ivo) Basor

Sorry. There are no soccer scores to report this month as there is a winter break among the First League Soccer Leagues in Yugoslavia. The next matches are scheduled for the beginning of March. I will report then to you when I receive the scores.

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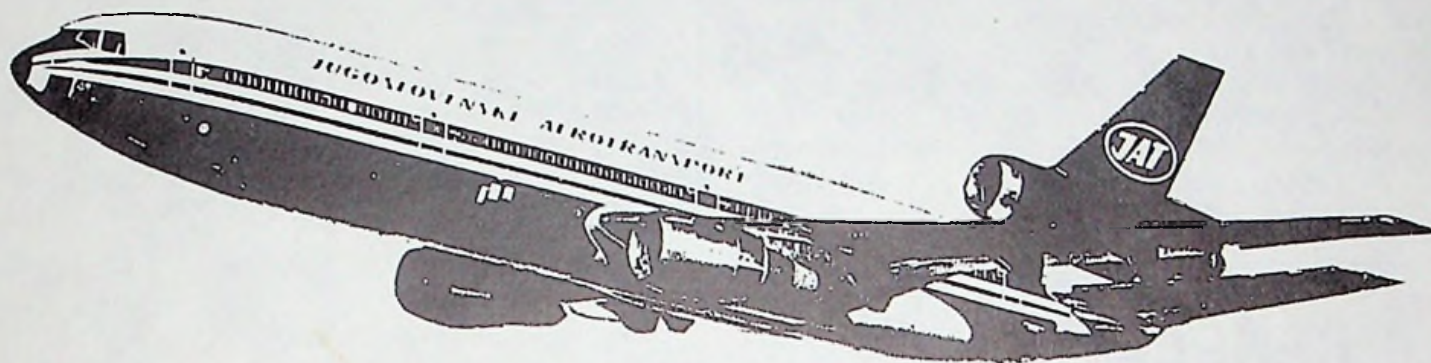
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JAT is pleased to announce that it has created a new office at the New York airport (JFK) that will make travel between Yugoslavia and the United States easier. Our staff in New York will greet incoming flights to facilitate necessary transfers and will see to it that outgoing passengers are properly routed. Special attention is provided by our staff for older people and for those who do not speak English.

If you decide to visit "the Old Country" or would like to bring relatives from Yugoslavia to the United States, we believe that JAT is the answer. Our Serbo-Croatian and English speaking staff will do their utmost to accomodate you or your relatives and to take the worry out of your journey.

You can make reservations with your travel agent or directly through our JAT office in Los Angeles. Our telephone numbers are:
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Mato & Judy Paljetak & Family	Watsonville
(Becky) Brook Carpenter	Watsonville
Marjoree Secondo	Watsonville
Isabelle Secondo	Watsonville
Ann Backovich	Watsonville
John & Mary Tartaro Jr.	Santa Clara
Anna M. Bencich	Watsonville
John & Aneita Radov	Watsonville
Simon & Katherine Radov	Watsonville
Ted & Dorothy Bohn	Watsonville
Cindy Meidl	Watsonville
Arnold & Johanna Moe	Campbell

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by

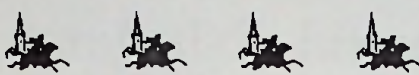
Andy Gulermovich

Orašac is around 5 miles northwest of Dubrovnik as the crow flies. It is somewhat further by automobile because of the numerous indentations of the coastline and the scarcity of bridges. It is situated near the coast at the foot of Mt. Vračevo, elevation 1,300 feet and Mt. Golo, elevation 900 feet. These 2 mountains protect Orašac from the cold northerly winds. Below the village are excellent beaches suitable for swimming and numerous docks for small pleasure boats. The beach is reached via a beautiful footpath dotted with groves of pines. There are numerous natural springs which provide fresh water.

There is a small stream nearby which separates Orašac from the nearby hamlet of Poljice. In 1399 this stream formed the border between the Republic of Dubrovnik and the kingdom of Bosnia. Slightly above the village is the fortified summer residence of Filippo Saporaro, who was the Austrian Ambassador to Dubrovnik in 1700. The residence is heavily fortified. Next to this residence is a small Dominican monastery which dates back to 1690. There are several other old churches and chapels nearby.

Below the village and on the cliffs overlooking the sea stands the once monumental Arapovo Castle where the Chief Magistrate of Florence, Pietro Soderini, fled upon the Medici family's restoration. The landscape of Orasac is predominated by groves of Mediterranean Cypress trees, olive groves and of course vineyards.

Orašac, today, serves as the administrative center for the villages of Gromace, Kliševeo, Mrčevo, and Mravinjac. Orašac and these villages are the birthplaces of several of the Pajaro Valley families of Yugoslav origin.



MY TRAVELS THROUGH EUROPE

by
Cindy Meidl

My trip started when I left San Francisco. We arrived at Heathrow in England on September 20, 1979. We traveled through England to Prestbury North England, Port Dinorwic North Wales, Edinburgh, Scotland, Hovercraft over English Channel on to Amsterdam, Holland, Ohdenburg & Cologne Germany, then 2 days up Rhine River to Bingin Germany and then on to the Orient Express to Vienna & Salsburg, Austria. From there to Interlockin, Switzerland, Florence & Venice, Italy. All night train to Brindisi, Italy - by boat to Corfu & Patros, Greece - then train to Athens & North to Scopia, Greece - then taxi over Yugoslav border, no problems getting visa. We then went by bus for 36 hours (due to errors and delays). On the last bus to Dubrovnik from Herceg-novi, while talking to co-travelers, a man spoke to us asking "Are you from the USA?" We answered "Yes. A small town in California, south of Santa Cruz on the coast." The man asked "Any chance Watsonville? I used to live there." I answered "Yes. I am from Watsonville. Did you know my grandfather, Antone Brautovich?" At this point we all got emotional because this man was George Czar and he knew my entire family. He became our interpreter, took us to a hotel for the night and the next day to breakfast. He then took us to my cousin Niko Brautovich's in Mocići. George asked Niko's wife Lucy if she could rent a room for a few days to 3 girls from the U.S.A. She said yes and then George told her who I was. She called Niko (who was building a fireplace in the house) and we all cried a lot. It was a very emotional experience! We had a marvelous time meeting relatives and seeing the "old town". We didn't speak any Yugoslav and they spoke no English but we got on just great! I met my great aunt Tetka Pave Svago, my grandfather's only living immediate relative as she is his sister and she lives in a village called Vodovda. Tetka Pave is 85 years old and seems

in fine health. She is a darling.

We stayed 5 days in Mocići and I called my Aunt Babe on November 13, from the airport thanks to Ivo Stepovic, telephone operator at Dubrovnik Airport. We then flew to Rome then on to Monaco and spent Thanksgiving gambling and eating. We then went to Paris, France and on to Portugal and then on to Spain, Costa del Sol, Malaga where I got robbed and mugged. All alone I went to the hospital then to the U.S. Embassy and then London and home on December 19. I hid out for 6 days, and then surprised the family on Christmas day at Aunt Babe's and Uncle Ron's. What a day that was!!

I would like to take this opportunity to say greetings from Yugoslavia from George Czar to Catherine Czar of Salinas, CA. - to Catherine Lettunich & friends who helped him after the earthquake. Also to Frank Stepovich in Fresno from Ivo Stepovich. To Aunt Louise & Uncle John Borcovich from Niko Borković - from Niko Pervetić & family to Tony & Clara Pervetich. Also to John Basor and his mother.

I really would like to learn the Yugoslav language and go back to Yugoslavia. It is a beautiful country and you can't beat the people for hospitality.

Sincere thanks,
from Cindy Meidl, a reader of
The KALIFORNSKI and a new member of
YACO.

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Special to Us

TV NEWS:

'Skag'

The NBC television network has a new TV series that airs on Thursday evenings. The program debuted in a 3 hour movie on January 6. The series stars the Academy Award Winner, Karl Malden (Mladen Sekulovich). He portrays the son of a Yugoslav immigrant, who works as a steelworker in Pennsylvania. Pete Skagska goes by the nickname, "Skag". The series is contemporary and I feel should be of interest to Yugoslavs. The opening episode had Skag talking to his immigrant father in Serbo-Croatian (only a little) and drinking slivovic. Be sure and tune it in next Thursday and I'm sure that you'll enjoy it on NBC, Channel 8.

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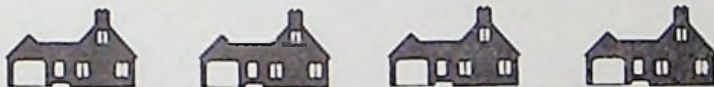


Yugoslav Radio Hour

Be sure and listen to the YUGOSLAV RADIO HOUR every Sunday at 9:35 a.m. at 1340 on your dial, that's radio station KOMY. The producers and hosts are YACO members, Andy and Ann Soldo. They will gladly play any request that you wish. Call or write the Soldos c/o Station KOMY, 40 Atkinson Lane, Watsonville, CA 95076. They will play any request whether it be birthday, anniversary or any special announcement. This program is one of the most important links with the Yugoslav community and we strongly urge you to support the YUGOSLAV RADIO HOUR. The music is most enjoyable and the Soldos bring us the latest as well as old favorites from Yugoslavia.

Building Fund

The YACO Executive Board at its meeting on December 9, 1979, authorized the establishing of a YACO Building Fund. We are not so naive as to think that anything so momentous can be realized in the near future, but as the ancient Chinese proverb says, "The journey of 1,000 miles begins with one step." We'll start the steps and maybe someday.....



Be One of
Our Flock!
Join YACO



FIRST

ANNIVERSARY

VALENTINE THEME POTLUCK FOR ALL TO ENJOY
AND

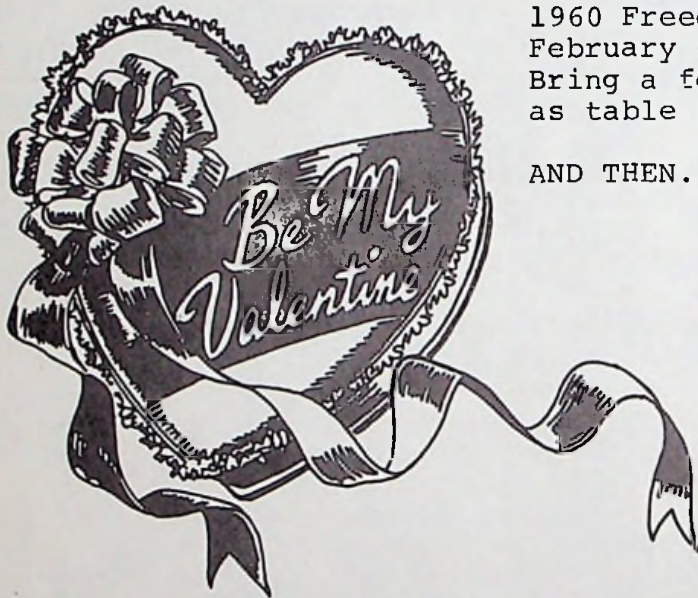
SHARE WITH US ON FEBRUARY 3, 1980 at VFW HALL IN
FREEDOM, FROM 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. - COME, BRING A
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VISITING FROM YUGOSLAVIA


Mrs. Pave Dragoje is visiting sister-in-law Mrs. Luce Basor and her nephew John Basor as well as her brother Stephen Basor and his wife Pauline. Mrs. Dragoje arrived here in December and will return to her home in Konavle, Yugoslavia about March. At this time she is keeping busy visiting many friends and relatives here in Watsonville and in California. She is very much impressed with the one story buildings and homes here in California as in her hometown the majority of the homes and buildings are at least two story and there is much climbing of stairs wherever you must go.



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CAVTAT, Mausoleum of the Račić family

VACATION IN YUGOSLAVIA by Pete Gulermovich

After corresponding with various relatives for over 40 years, and having several families of relatives come to America to vacation and visit, I kept a promise I made to my relatives and, with many thanks to my nephew, Andy Gulermovich, we both journeyed to Yugoslavia. It was my first visit and Andy's fourth. Although we spent some time touring ancient Rome, I enjoyed the beauty and splendor of Yugoslavia's Adriatic coastal cities of Dubrovnik and Cavtat much, much more.

We arrived approximately 6:45 p.m. in Dubrovnik's very modern airport. Disembarking from the plane, I spotted about 20 people waving from a veranda type balcony. I looked back thinking maybe someone aboard our flight was a VIP, but as we got closer, I could hear the chant - "Andro! Andro!". You see, he was walking ahead of me, and, besides, he's obviously easier to spot! They then spotted a trailing guy walking with a slight limp following Andy's every foot step. They had heard that I had had a couple of dacron insert grafts on my aorta, so they sensed it was "Pero! Pero!", me. That was our beginning! In a condensed way, I did find Yugoslavia beautiful and its people proud and extremely hospitable. It has to be all this; why else would 30 million people visit and vacation in Yugoslavia in 1978?

I found that each store and shop had someone who spoke English. Their kids have it as a compulsory subject. I saw the modern and up-to-date things in the towns and cities, and the old and ancient in the small villages. Both had their own special beauty.

cont'd on page 12

Big, modern diesel buses travel on every road and in every village, usually every half hour. But, be careful when taking a seat in an overflow crowd, because it's expected, and the custom, to give up your seat to an elderly woman. In fact, she will ask who's got a seat for a "stara baba" (old grandmother). If you don't, she'll scorn you by eye balling you directly. It works! And besides, it makes sense.

Andy and I visited cousins and had several meals in the house where my mother and her mother and etc. were born. The house is made of beautiful stone on the outside and wood framing inside. Present cousins and village records indicate the house is at least 350 years old. We also visited the house where my father was born. It's also very old. It serves as a summer home for a city guy.

In the small towns of Cavtat, Obod, Mlini, etc., about 8 to 10 miles south of Dubrovnik, there's "gotta be" 1000 Gulermovichs. I visited several very old cemeteries that contained ancestors of many, many Slavs from the Pajaro Valley, and tombstones with inscriptions dating way back. Most names ended with "vic", which sort of means "son of", as in Janson, or "ski" in Polish, or "Mac" in Irish, etc. No one was known to have, or need, a last name until after 800 A.D. When the need became apparent to have a last name, it was initiated by the designation "son of" someone named John, Luke, Paul, etc. Another method was using a name indicating a trade, occupation, or location etc.

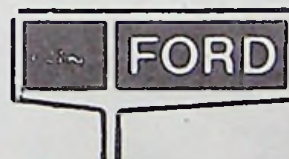
Many of Yugoslavia's tourists were impressed with the low hotel rates compared to other European countries. As an example, \$16.00 to \$22.00 a night will get you as good, or better, than many available in the Monterey Bay area. We found, and used, escalators in large department stores. We found parking places in the cities full and hard to come by in mid-October yet!

The weather at the time was beautiful, usually about 65 to 70 degrees during the day. The stores were heavily laden with merchandise. According to Andy's previous trips, inflation has hit them also, thus goods cost somewhat more than before. They do here too, sometimes weekly!

The relatives (cousins) that we visited on my father's side had living conditions ranging from modest to good. They all had televisions, refrigerators, gas stoves, etc. Several had color televisions, although expensive. Transportation was furnished by three sets of relatives' cars. It's not uncommon for a man and wife to have two cars. In fact, a distant cousin gave Andy and me a lift in a new 1979 Mercedes, which is an exception. Andy asked him how he liked his car. The guy said emphatically, "Dammit, I wish I had bought an Oldsmobile diesel instead!"

Each Yugoslav somehow thinks each mile of road is his private playground. The bus drivers are even worse. They set their sights, press on the trigger, and away you go. (Like a Sant Cruz roller coaster, for the timid!) The bus fare is usually 25 cents from one city to the next. Several times Andy and I paid \$10.00 taxi fees in order to recuperate. On the bus, Andy would say "Uncle Pete, close your eyes and don't look." I had to look to see if I would have time to say one prayer, or a lot of them!

cont'd on page 13



Marty Franich

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The Yugoslavs sure eat hearty! They must think a stomach ulcer attack is a hunger signal. The delicious wine flows freely before, during, and after a meal. A cousin asked me if Americans generally drink a lot of wine. I said no because they can't handle it that well. He remarked that is because Americans don't know what's really in the bottle. He said "We do because it's even our own bottle cork to start with."

Every town or city has a church about every 1000 feet. (You can't escape!) Andy and I attended services several times. We found them full of people each time. The churches had ancient beauty and splendor. Many of them are over 1000 years old and still standing the test of time. In observation, I found today's Yugoslavs to be very tall. Many young boys and even girls are over 6 feet in height. (Personally, I was short-changed). Regarding goods, the Yugoslavs delight in showing us "we've got those things too" sort of saying "you see, we're not backward!" The very little that I've really seen, I'd say they are not. Over all, it was an exciting and beautiful trip, but I wouldn't trade Watsonville for any place on earth!



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Slavs of the Pajaro Valley:

The following is a reprint of a 5-part series done by Ward Bushee of the Watsonville Register-Parjonian. The series started on June 3, 1968. THE KALIFORNSKI is grateful to Frank Orr and the staff of the Pajaronian for allowing us to run it in our newsletter. As the series is a lengthy one, THE KALIFORNSKI will run Parts 1 & 2 in this issue, and Parts 3 & 4 in the February issue and Part 5 in the March issue.

Oddly enough, Dalmatians were the earliest foreigners to arrive in the central coast area of California. These were sailors who deserted their ships or were put ashore in the early part of the 19th century when the Spanish period was in full bloom.

The real influx of Dalmatians began well before this century. Mark Rabasa, about whom little is known today, is generally credited with being the first Slav to go into the apple business. He arrived in the 1870s. Several families whose names are well known today go back before 1900, including the aforementioned Scuriches and Lettuniches, as well as the Marinoviches, Cikuths and Novacoviches. The trickle of immigrants turned into a stream in the first decade of this century, and the flow was not completely turned off until World War I.

The new arrivals were mostly young, single males who came to the United States with the idea of making as much money as possible in as short a time as possible and returning home. Louis Resetar, one of the four Resetar brothers who emigrated to the Pajaro Valley and established a small farming empire, recalls that when he arrived in the United States, "If somebody says I'm going to stay 10 years, I wouldn't believe them."

How did they succeed so brilliantly against such adversity? Perhaps a brief look at the origins of some of the families in the valley will tell part of the story.

There is the Cikuth family, for

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example, fathered in this country by Luke P. Cikuth (also known as Louis) whose early trials and hardships are typical of many other early immigrant arrivals.

Mr. Cikuth was born in Dalmatia in 1873, and emigrated to the U.S. in 1889 in his midteens. "I heard about California; that was all you heard back home," he recalls.

Upon arriving, he worked at a number of jobs, such as dish washing, apple picking, and in the Spreckels sugar mill in Watsonville, where he nearly exhausted himself handling from 1,500 to 1,600 sacks of sugar a day, each weighing 170 pounds.

Mr. Cikuth's earnings were small - in the orchards, the usual \$1 a day plus board. In the thrifty manner of Slavs, he saved every penny. When he had accumulated \$500, he and John Zar, who had \$1,000, formed a partnership to buy, pack and ship fruit. In the first year, Mr. Cikuth more than doubled his \$500 investment. Zar returned to Yugoslavia, so the following year Mr. Cikuth formed a partnership with J.P. Mioovich and Mitchell Pendo.

The young men continued to build the business, buying the crops of the small home orchards of the time. Mr. Pendo returned to Yugoslavia in 1904, and Mr. Mioovich did the same in 1908, Mr. Cikuth carrying on the business himself until the 1920s when he retired from the packing business, although continuing to grow apples.

Even earlier came M. N. Lettunich, described by the Watsonville Evening Pajaronian as the "dean of the Watsonville apple industry."

The newspaper bestowed this title as the result of Mr. Lettunich's having shipped the first carload of apples from the Pajaro Valley to London. This was either in the fall of 1887 or 1888 - accounts conflict.

Mr. Lettunich, a native of Dalmatia, came to Watsonville in May of 1887 from Arcata, near Eureka in northern California, where he spent part of his boyhood. He had worked for and with his second cousin, Mateo, in the hotel and restaurant business in Arcata. "I had a little money when I came here from Eureka," he told a Watsonville reporter years later. "The future here appeared wonderful."

It was indeed, as it turned out. With his first venture, an apple packing shed, he prospered. Later, Mateo joined him, and they became business partners. One result of this relationship, which lasted many years, was the construction of the Lettunich building in the heart of Watsonville, the city's principal office building (although many of its upper offices have been vacant in recent years). Mr. Lettunich, besides buying and shipping apples (he was the first to locate a shed near a rail line) later went into farming himself. He also spread into other fields, helping to organize the Appleton Investment Co., which built the Appleton hotel, and the Fruit Growers National Bank (the Bank of America here is a decedant).

Mr. Lettunich died in 1955 at the age of 92, leaving his wife Grace, and a son Prosper. The Lettunich line was also continued through a brother of M.N., Peter (there was another brother, Edward B., who has no descendants.). Mateo had two sons, both of whom are dead. Other Lettuniches arrived in intervening years, and the name is well established today here.

Nicholas M. Borina at 11 was brought from his home near Dubrovnik to San Francisco by an uncle. He went to school in San Francisco and after the 1906 earthquake, worked as a carpenter during the reconstruction period. Not liking the work, he migrated to Watsonville and worked for a Mr. Radovan, who had a packing house on Wall (Third) Street. In 1912, having saved some money, he went into business for himself. He became both a grower (he leased his first orchard in Aromas), packer and shipper, later joining J. J. Crowley (who was not Slav) in partnership. During World War I, he bought part of the old Thompson orchard which is still in the family today, although farmed as strawberry land under lease by his two daughters.

Success is not without its risks. Mr. Borina took a flyer into berries, and did so well that in the 1930s he became the largest grower of berries in California.

Mr. Borina found his wife in the Secondo family, another name that dates back to the 1890s in the Pajaro Valley. As a rule the old country

Dalmatians married Slavs for obvious reasons of language, custom, and background, and the interfamily ties among the Dalmatians today would give a genealogist nightmares.

(The first American - born, however, felt free to marry outside the Slav community, and many did, generally choosing girls of Anglo-Saxon families who were Catholic. Irish girls ideally fitted this requirement.)

The previously mentioned Scuriches are woven through the cross-hatch of Slav families in the valley. Stephen Scurich Sr. was born in Dalmatia in 1868, came to San Francisco at the age of 16, and when 18, joined his brother Luke in Watsonville, The latter having arrived in the valley in 1883. The Scurich brothers formed a partnership and bought a 100 acre ranch in the Green Valley area.

As the brothers accumulated money, they brought over their brothers and sisters from Dalmatia, which helps account for the proliferation of Scuriches today.

Among the many families the Scuriches are joined with by marriage is that of Franich. John Frnaich, at 15, came to the Pajaro Valley in 1900. Like others, Mr. Franich worked in the orchards until he had saved enough money to go into business himself. Later, he sent for his brother Martin, with whom he formed a partnership (still later, a sister, Pauline, came over) in the growing, buying, and shipping of apples.

Four years after John Franich died in 1944, the firm was dissolved. Rather, it separated into two new firms, one the Martin John Franich Co., grower and shipper, with three partners, Mrs. Pauline F. Colberg, Martin J. Franich (managing) and Anthony J. Franich, lawyer, the latter sons of John; the other firm was Martin Franich and Sons, growers, made up of Martin Sr. and his two sons, Martin Jr. (Marty) an automobile dealer, and Charles, a Superior Court Judge.

The Resetar name is a dominant one in the agricultural life of the Pajaro Valley, concerned with the growing, packing, and shipping of both fruit and row crops, and with allied industries such as lettuce cooling. The

principal hotel in Watsonville carries the Resetar name, and the family owns other business properties as well as extensive farm and orchard lands.

Nevertheless, the Resetars got their start much as did their contemporaries. Mike Resetar was the first to arrive, in 1899, at 13 brother Mitchell followed in 1904, Louis in 1908, and Anton in 1913. (Louis, incidentally, came over from Dalmatia with a group of boys that included two from the Scurich family. It was an emotional experience. Upon arriving in New York, he says, "When I saw the Statue of Liberty, I cried.")

Louis Resetar recalls working on ranches and in the orchards, 10 hours a day, for \$1 a day plus board. On the ranches, he and other men lived in barracks-type quarters, usually with a kitchen downstairs and sleeping quarters upstairs. If the men were unable to get to town very often because of distance and transportation difficulties, there was some compensation in that the ranch owner provided wine freely, and sometimes stronger stuff.

The first three brothers to arrive moved around at first. Mike went to San Francisco, Mitchell to the gold fields, and Louis to Oakland at various times. Mike and Mitchell returned to Watsonville after the San Francisco earthquake and formed a partnership to buy and ship apples. Louis joined them later.

"If you had \$500, you could go into business in those days,"

Anton returned to Dalmatia in 1913, but came back to Watsonville in 1927 for good. The Resetar firm, meanwhile, continued to grow, and in the 1930s branched into the infant lettuce business, adding a whole new and profitable dimension to the company. The business is still a predominantly family-one, and as such, the extent of its holdings and its financial fortunes are closely-guarded affairs. Sons and grandsons, or husbands of daughters and granddaughters, fill key positions in the huge firm.

After World War II, it became difficult, under the quota system, to enter the United States. The few who did arrive (they had to be sponsored

NOTE: Part III cont'd next month.

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Who Discovered America?

by
Andy Gulermovich

As much as I would like to prove these 2 scenarios to be factual, it is impossible. There are no known records to indicate the name of the sailor who first spotted land from Columbus' trio of ships nor is there any record of who actually first stepped ashore. But one fact is certain. There were Yugoslavs there. In this, we can all be proud. Regardless of who first spotted land or stepped ashore, they were Yugoslavs who participated in making the event possible.

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